AIRPORT BEACON

A publication of Muskegon County Airport

Second Quarter 4 2009

Transportation Committee
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Robert Scolnik, Vice Chair
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Lew Collins
James J. Derezinski
Marvin R. Engle
Kenneth Mahoney
Louis A. McMurray
Charles Nash
I. John Snider II
Roger Wade

Questions, Comments, Suggestions?
Submit to:
Muskegon County Airport
99 Sinclair Drive
Muskegon, MI 49441
Phone: 231-798-4596, Fax: 231-798-7728
homanpa@co.muskegon.mi.us

In addition to many fine chain restaurants, a group of local restaurant owners have gotten together to form LAKESHORE RESTAURANT ORIGINALS. Their mission is to promote, celebrate and support locally owned restaurants. When you dine at one of the Restaurant "Originals", you experience the unique flavor of our community, and a sense that you have been somewhere special, somewhere, chances are, that the owner greeted and seated you, made you feel very welcome, appreciated, and well cared for.

As a Lakeshore Restaurant Original, the Brownstone Restaurant is a dramatic departure from the traditional fare found at most airports, offering fresh pasta dishes, soups, deli sandwiches, as well as a full dinner menu. A full bar is available. Kids eat for only 99 cents everyday and the parking is free! Catering and conference rooms are available as well.

Other Restaurant Originals include CF Prime, Dockers Fish House and Lounge, Hobo's Tavern, Pints and Quarts, The Cherokee, The Hearthstone Bistro, The Sardine Room, Toast and Jams, and Alleyways.

Where you choose to eat has a huge impact on the quality of life in your community. The majority of the money you spend locally stays in our community and its economy. It's reinvested, helps to support vast and vital community charities, and helps to create and sustain our vibrant and unique neighborhoods.

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From the Airport Manager

Submitted by Marty Piette

The Muskegon County Board of Commissioners recently approved the revival of the Airport Advisory Committee. The Airport Advisory Committee's purpose is to allow for citizen input on various issues facing the Airport, such as (but not limited to) expansion, funding, safety regulations, customer service, education of the public on the advantages of a county owned airport, identification and prioritization of future needs, and offering ideas for the marketing and the growth of the Airport. Term length is two years after initial staggered appointments. Meetings are as scheduled by the Committee. No per diem is paid.

Applications are being sought for the following designated slots:

1 - General Public

3 - Private Sector

2 - Airport Business Park Tenants

Interested applicants can obtain an application by calling the County Administrator's office at 231-724-6505. More information on the Airport Advisory Committee is available at http://co.muskegon.mi.us/boardofcommissioners/citizens.htm.

FAA Plans TRACON Move

Submitted by Marty Piette

The Federal Aviation Administration has proposed consolidating TRACON service from MKG (Muskegon), GRR (Grand Rapids), AZO (Kalamazoo) and LAN (Lansing) into a new, single facility in AZO in 2013. AZO is in the process of designing/building a new air traffic control tower which can absorb the radar services currently provided at the individual airports. The FAA's argument is that the consolidation will save money at no risk to safety. The union representing controllers at the MKG tower are against the proposed consolidation, citing safety concerns and noting that no proof exists that the consolidation will save money. The Muskegon County Board of Commissioners is also against the proposal, worried about the loss of quality jobs. Although it is unclear how many jobs may be affected, there are currently 26 air traffic controllers employed in the MKG facility.

We ask that you get involved and let your voice be heard. Please write a letter and mail/email it to Airport Administration at 99 Sinclair Drive, Muskegon, MI 49441. We will forward your comments to the FAA, concerned legislators, and local officials.

Muskegon CareAffaire 2009

Submitted by Executive Air Transport

The 14th annual Wings of Mercy, Muskegon CareAffaire, will be held on Saturday, May 30, 2009. This annual event is hosted by Executive Air Transport and the Muskegon Lions Club. The "CareAffaire" fundraiser helps provide the necessary funds for Wings of Mercy to continue its mission, which is providing free private air transportation for medical patients with low or limited disposable income. The event is held at Executive Air Transport from 8:00am until noon and offers enjoyment for all ages. Events and activities range from the famous Lions Club pancake breakfast to aircraft rides and displays, warbird rides and displays, a vintage car show and a 5K run, all of which continue to draw larger crowds every year. Last year's event was a great success with an estimated turnout of 1,800 people. Please put this date on your calendar and remember the event is a fundraiser for the West Michigan-born charity, Wings of Mercy. For more information on Wings of Mercy, please visit their website at www.wingsofmercy.org.

Executive Air Transport Hosts Italian Helicopter Team

Since mid November, representatives from the Italian helicopter manufacturer, AgustaWestland, have considered Executive Air Transport and Muskegon their home away from home. The AgustaWestland Ice Trials Team consists of 20 members ranging from mechanics, technicians, scientists, and pilots.

The group chose the Muskegon area because of the facility and the winter weather patterns associated with Lake Michigan. The objective of their visit is to obtain data which the team will use in gaining "Known Icing Certification" for the 15,000 pound AgustaWestland 139 helicopter. This long and lengthy process of flying into icing conditions has proven very successful this winter with our longer and colder than normal winter season. In fact, more successful than their previous flight testing conducted in Minnesota and Alaska. "We have been very satisfied with the flight testing in this area and the people of Muskegon have been great to work with," said Test Pilot Nigel Talbot. He and the AgustaWestland team are nearly finished with the flight testing and hope to have the approval by European aviation officials, Transport Canada, and the Federal Aviation Administration before the end of this year. "This is a long and detailed process to obtain the certification for icing," says Talbot.

The AgustaWestland 139 is a new generation twin turbine powered helicopter which is currently in service throughout the world. Owners of this model include governments, corporations, search and rescue organizations, law enforcement agencies, and medical response teams. When approval for flights into "Known Icing Conditions" is received, AgustaWestland will have the only helicopter in its class in the world with this approval. According to Executive Air Transport President Rex Vanderlinde, the flight testing team is expected to remain in Muskegon until late April or early May. "We have really enjoyed hosting our Italian friends this winter and look forward to them visiting Muskegon in the future with additional projects." For additional information on the AgustaWestland 139, please visit their website at www.agustawestland.com.

Marge Beaver is an aerial photographer with over 25 years of experience flying and shooting custom aerial photography jobs all over the country. Her plane, that has been hangared at KMKG since 1982, is a Cessna Cardinal which she equipped with camera ports for both vertical (map-like) and oblique (scenic, angled) photography. She has logged nearly 7,000 hours in the air flying and photographing all kinds of subjects from the mundane to the exotic. She can print enlargements of her photos in-house up to 44" x 80". Digital images can also be purchased for use on brochures, websites, etc., and she is available for custom jobs anywhere in the Midwest. Marge has two coffee table style books currently available titled Above the North, and Above West Michigan that illustrate her love affair with our beautiful state. There will be a third book available this summer titled Above the Lighthouses – Lake Michigan. Personalized copies can be obtained directly from Marge. Her business is called Photography Plus, and she can be reached at 231-798-2395 or through her website at www.photography-plus.com.

Marge is a great-grandmother with 4 living children (raised 5), 11 grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren. She didn't start her flying career until after her major family obligations were behind her. Once she took an introductory ride in a small plane, though, she was immediately addicted, and the rest, as they say, is history. The necessity of needing a way to pay for an expensive flying addiction, plus an already well established love of photography provided the building blocks for the birth of her aerial photography business.

Runway expansion (not complete), taken October, 2008

Photography Plus
1571 GOODY ROAD
MUSKEGON, MI 49441
PHONE: (231)798-2395
FAX: (231)798-3839
www.photography-plus.com

The Muskegon Lighthouse, which will be featured on the cover of Above the Lighthouses - Lake Michigan

Employee Spotlight

Our employee spotlight this quarter is Craig Kruzel. After recently retiring from 30 years of part-time work with the Norton Shores Fire Department, Craig will have more time for his airport maintenance job, his family and interests.

His 30 years with the fire department, he said, "were crazy!" People would say "We're running out and you're running in!" It takes a special person to be a fire fighter and he will miss the adrenalin rush he felt many times during the call of duty.

Craig has been with the airport for 8 1/2 years and loves this job as well. "Every day is different. Whether it's cutting grass, plowing snow, or facility maintenance, there is always something to do."

When Craig is not working, he's with his wife, Shelley, daughter Kari, and sons, Steve and Brandon. They are a family that serves. They have done missionary work in the Bahamas, Kentucky, and Mexico, just to name a few. He said, "It's a great bonding experience." He also enjoys Model Railroading and has 1,500 miniature train cars in his collection.

We wish Craig well in all his future endeavors.

Did you know ...

- There are more than 5,500 public-use airports in the U.S.
- There are 575 commercial service airports in the U.S.
- Muskegon County Airport is the 8th busiest airport in Michigan, and 296th (out of 575) in the nation.
- MKG had 65,275 aircraft operations in 2008.
- 95% of the traffic at MKG is General Aviation. General Aviation includes aircraft operated by local businesses and corporations, private individuals, emergency medical services, U.S. Coast Guard, law enforcement agencies, agricultural entities, etc.
- The economic impact of MKG to the community is approximately $54,000,000, which includes everything from taxes paid, income, job creation, business activity, etc.

Airport Contact Info

Airport Administration
231-798-4596, x-220
Airport Maintenance
231-798-4596, x-227
Northwest Airlines
800-225-2525
Air Travel Marketing Consultant
231-798-4596, x-262

AIRPORT BEACON

West Michigan Flying Club

Are you a pilot, looking for the next best thing to owning your own airplane? Have you considered a flying club? A flying club has its own fleet of aircraft which they maintain and hangar, so you don't have to. Fees are often less than renting, and scheduling time is easier. Not only is a flying club an affordable way to build time and fly a mix of aircraft, you will benefit from being part of a group of people who share the same interest – Flying.

The West Michigan Flying Club is located on the north side of Muskegon County Airport, and is one of the oldest flying clubs in Michigan. Low monthly dues and low hourly rates for a variety of planes make the WMFC a perfect fit for all pilots, from student to the most experienced. Check us out at: www.wmflyingclub.org. Come visit us, attend a meeting, or call with any questions. Kurt Kettelhut, WMFC Secretary, wmfc-secretary@comcast.net, (231) 744-3619.

Checked Luggage

Paying for checked luggage is the norm these days.

All customers that have purchased their tickets on or after November 12, 2008, for coach travel within the U.S. are charged $15 each way for the first bag. The second bag is $25 each way. The third is $125 each way and the fourth to tenth is $200 each way. There is a 50 pound weight limit per bag.

If you are a WorldPerks Elite or SkyMiles Medallion member, you are allowed up to 2 free bags. All passengers traveling international are allowed up to 2 free bags.

More information can be found on the Northwest and Delta websites.

Employee of the Month

November 08 ..... Jeff Carney, TSA
December 08 ..... Amanda Foster, Brownstone
January 09 ..... Nick Alt, National/Alamo
February 09 ..... Ryan Vanderstelt, Avis
March 09 ..... Kim Hammond, NW
April 09 ..... Linda Kampinga, Brownstone